

POSTOPERATIVE INFORMATION

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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS – ACL RECONSTRUCTION

DAY OF SURGERY:

1. Your brace will be applied in the operating room. You must wear the brace, locked, for 6 weeks when walking. You must wear the brace locked while sleeping, as well. You may unlock it for short periods when you are sitting 2 days after the surgery.
2. There are exercises included that you can begin on the first or second postoperative day.
3. Keep your leg elevated to decrease swelling, which will then in turn decrease your pain. When in bed, your leg should be straight with a pillow under the calf, NOT under the knee.
4. Prescriptions for pain medication (Norco) and an anti-inflammatory (aspirin) will be given to you when you leave. You should avoid taking pain medications on an empty stomach, as it will make you nauseous. Otherwise, use the pain medication as needed. Use the anti-inflammatory (aspirin) daily for 2 weeks after surgery, as prescribed, to reduce the swelling after surgery and to prevent blood clots. Colace is prescribed for constipation and zofran for nausea and can be used as needed after surgery.

DAY 1 AND UNTIL FIRST POST-OP VISIT:

1. Use ice 20-30 mins every at least a few times a day to help with pain and swelling. Place the ice on the upper thigh or lower shin area as it will not penetrate the post-operative dressing on your knee. Once the dressing comes off in 3 days, you can place ice more directly over the knee. Place a small towel or sheet over the knee so the ice does not contact the skin/incisions directly.
2. Remove the bandages 3 days after surgery and apply gauze to cover the incisions. Do not remove the white steri-strip tapes over the incisions. Re-apply clean gauze over the incision as needed. Do not put anything including bacitracin or ointments on or near the incisions.
3. You may shower 3 days after surgery but do **NOT** get the incisions wet. Wrap your knee with plastic wrap and secure it with tape around your thigh. Then, place the brace on and cover it using a cast bag or a garbage bag with a hole in the bottom for your foot. Secure it with tape around your ankle and thigh. If your sutures do get wet, pat them dry and re-apply fresh gauze.
4. Use the crutches while standing and walking so that you are only putting partial weight on your operated for the first week. After that, you can progress weight bearing as tolerated.

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5. Continue doing the exercises 2x day. Begin physical therapy around 2 weeks after your surgery.
5. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or take illicit drugs when taking pain medications.
6. You may return to sedentary work/school in the next couple of days when you feel up to it. You will need to keep you leg elevated as much as possible.
7. Call the office with any questions, and make an appointment to have your sutures removed at 2 weeks post-op.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

1. There may be some bleeding and fluid leaking from the incision site. This is normal after this type of surgery. This may continue for 24-36 hours. You may change and/or reinforce the bandages if needed. **Do Not** remove the white steri-strip tapes covering the incision even if they are wet or bloody.
2. There will be MORE swelling on days 1-3 than there is on the day of surgery. This also is normal. The swelling will decrease with the anti-inflammatory medication, the cryo-cuff and keeping it elevated. The swelling will make it more difficult to bend your knee. As the swelling goes down your motion will become easier.
3. You may develop swelling and bruising that extends from your knee down to your calf and perhaps even to your foot over the next week. Do not be alarmed. This too is expected, and it is due to gravity.
4. There may be some numbness adjacent to the incision site. This may last for 6-12 months.
5. It is also normal to develop a low-grade fever after surgery (up to 100.5°). This can last 2 days after surgery. If you have any concerns just let us know.